

Message Text

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SUBJ: MINISTER OF HEALTH SPEAKS ON DRUG ADDICTION

1. ON MARCH 21, THE RECENTLY APPOINTED MINISTER OF HEALTH (FORMER MINISTER OF LABOR) TINA ANSELMI OPENED A SEMINAR ON DRUG DEPENDENCY AT THE SUPERIOR INSTITUTE OF HEALTH. HER'S WAS A PLEA FOR PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE SERIOUSNESS AND DIMENSIONS OF THE DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM IN ITALY, AND A CALL FOR THE RAPID ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL NETWORK OF TREATMENT CENTERS.

2. ACCORDING TO MINISTER ANSELMI THE USE OF NARCOTIC SUBSTANCES IN ITALY INCREASED IN 1977 BY 83 PERCENT OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR (THE LARGEST INCREMENT BEING IN HASHISH OIL). IN THE SAME PERIOD CRIMINALCHARGES FOR TRAFFICKING AND RELATED CRIMES INCREASED BY 14 PERCENT. ON THE BASIS OF A STUDY OF DRUG DEPENDENCY PERFORMD IN SEVERAL MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS , 8 PERCENT OF A 10,000-ADDICT SAMPLE WERE UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE, 61 PERCENT BETWEEN 18 AND 25, 30 PERCENT OVER AGE 25. MINISTER ANSELMI REFERRED TO FURTHER STATISTICS: IN 1977 THERE WAS A 146 PERCENT INCREASE IN THE NUBER OF THEFTS OF NARCOTICS FROM PHARMACIES; MALE ADICTS OUTNUMBER FEMALE FOUR TO ONE; OVERDOSE DEATHS IN 1977 WERE 40, AS OPPPOSED TO 31 IN 1976.

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3. ALONG WITH THE STUDY MENTIONED ABOVE, MINISTER ANSELMI SAID THAT A CENSUS HAD BEEN TAKEN OF ADDICTS APPEARING IN HOSPITAL AND POLICE RECORDS WHICH INDICATED A TOTAL OF 2,700 RUG DEPENDENTS, FROM WHICH A SIMILARNUMBER COULD BE EXTRAPOLATED OF THOSE WO ARE ON THE VERGE OF APPEARING IN HOSPITAL AND POLICE RECORDS, AND AT LEAST 4 TO 5 TIMES THAT NUNBER WHO HAVE PASSED FROM THE EXPERIMENTING STAGE TOWARD FULL DEPENDENCE.

4. " THE PROBLEM OF DRUG DEPENDENCY MUST BE SEEN, CONFRONTED
AND HOPEFULLY SOLVED AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM," SAID MINISTER ANSELM.
IT WAS A PROBLEM, SHE ASSERTED, OF THE RE-ENTRY OF AN UNFORTUNATELY
GROWING GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE INTO A SOCIETY WHICH OFFERS THEM
NO HELP, BECAUSE, SHE SAID, " IT CANNOT OFFER THEM JOBS
AND FEEDS THEM FALSE OBJECTIVES." IN CONCLUSION MINISTER
ANSELM UNDERSCORED THE NEED TO SENSITIZE THE PUBLIC TO THE PROBLEMS
OF REHABILITATION: "MUCH CAN BE DONE IN THE SCHOOLS, MUCH CAN
BE DONE IN THE WORLD OF LABOR, MUCH CAN AND MUST BE DONE BY
ALL OF US TO BECOME CO-RESPONSIBLE PARTICIPANTS IN THE STRUGGLE
TO RECOVER FOR SOCIETY SO MUCH SOLID ENERGY.GARDNER

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